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ABSTRACT

Intended for parents, the booklet (part of a 10 booklet series on talented and gifted education) discusses the identification of gifted and talented children and offers general information on their development. Giftedness and talent are defined, and some guidelines for parents' identification of giftedness and talent are presented, focusing on such areas as dramatic and representational play, humor, reading, vocabulary, abstract thinking, and peer relationships. The identification process is examined in terms of testing, teacher observation, and parent identification. Parents' and children's rights are also considered. A bibliography is presented, along with a list of sources of information on the talented and gifted. Also provided are descriptions of common identification tools and a sample copy of the Boyd Developmental Progress Scale. (DLS)

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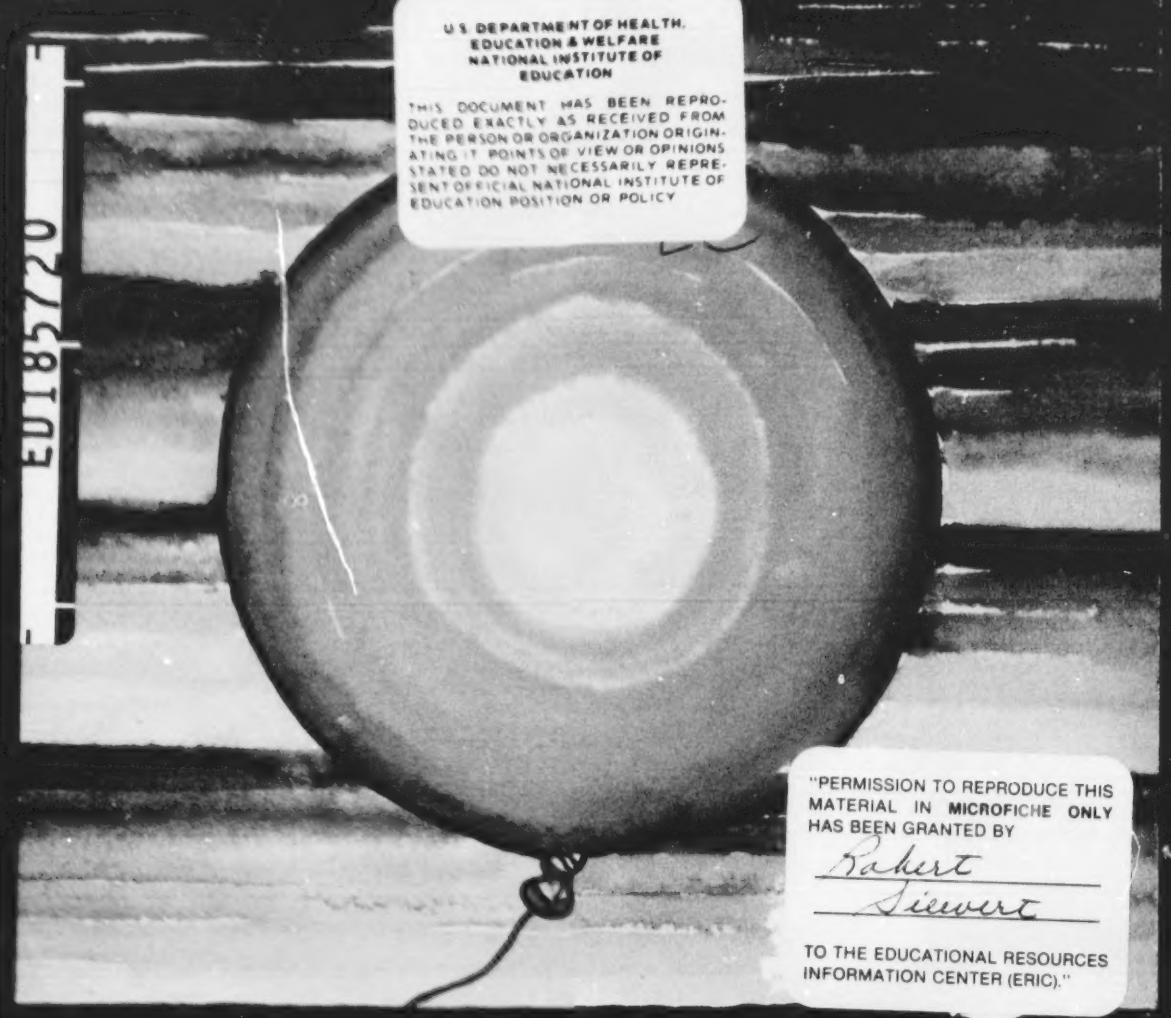

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WHO IS GIFTED?

WHO IS GIFTED?

Kendra Morberg

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Oregon Association for Talented And Gifted

Oregon State DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

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FOREWORD

The purpose of this booklet is to provide guidance and information for parents about gifted children and their general development. As parents become knowledgeable with a formal definition of giftedness, and specific characteristics commonly exhibited by talented and gifted students, it is hoped that they will become more involved in the identification process of these children. The booklet supplies a general developmental profile for parents to use in focusing on their child's development. Additional questions are also provided for parental focus on their children's dramatic play, representational play, and humor.

A background on identification, testing procedures, teacher observation, outcomes of identification, and parents' rights and options, are provided to encourage the best possible collaboration between the home and school in identifying the talented and gifted child. Only through this joint collaboration can the children receive the program design and delivery that is most appropriate for them.

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WHO ARE THE GIFTED?

A DEFINITION

With today's emphasis on gifted education in the state and nation, it is vital that parents be familiarized with the concept of who are gifted and how they are identified. The Department of Education's definition of giftedness shows the variety of dimensions of giftedness:

> Talented and gifted children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society.
>
> Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas:
>
> - General intellectual ability
> - Specific academic aptitude
> - Creative or productive thinking
> - Leadership ability
> - Visual and performing arts

CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED CHILDREN

Gifted children have shown that they can exceed far above former expectations, assimilating knowledge at a much greater rate and arriving at a place of creativity and productivity sooner than the average child. These children may demonstrate amazing creative thinking, productive thinking and a variety of surprising skills. The skills may be demonstrated in informal or formal situations; with social relationships or acquiring technical knowledge. The preschool gifted may exhibit: long periods of concentration; independence, initiative and self directness in tasks; intense curiosity and inquisitiveness.

The assumption that all talented and gifted are identical is erroneous. They do share some fundamental characteristics, but the level of development and the manifestations of these characteristics can differ significantly among gifted individuals. Many gifted have different interests and hobbies, and are always in search of new frontiers. Most are outgoing and friendly and have a well developed sense of humor. But gifted people cannot do everything equally well; they all differ greatly in their abilities.

When considering an identification system, a good testing device is a tool to help evaluate, understand and interpret individual differences in behavior and performance among gifted children. It should be used to assess the child's readiness to learning and to see the individual child's strengths and weaknesses.

WHAT SHOULD PARENTS LOOK FOR?

It is important to discover the potentially gifted and able child early if the child's needs are to be met. Where are these young children found? How is the gifted child found who is not functioning adequately in a regular classroom setting? The parent is the missing link.

Parents are able to supply developmental information not readily observable. See the Appendix of this booklet for observational guidelines taken from the Boyd Developmental Progress Scale. Parents have the opportunity to observe their child's behavior under a wide variety of conditions and have a more extensive sample of behaviors. Some behaviors parents should be sensitive to and look for are:

- Learning to read before entering school, sometimes teaching themselves the process of reading
- Using large vocabularies for their age
- Acquiring basic skills quickly
- Displaying an ability for abstract thinking in advance of their peers
- Concentrating and attending to information for long periods of time

- Having a wide variety of interests and experimenting with them
- Possessing a highly developed sense of curiosity and a limitless supply of questions
- Constructing relationships between things that are not readily obvious
- Retaining a lot of information
- Relating well to peers and adults

Some questions which may guide parent observations are:

Dramatic play

- Does your child ever engage in make believe play in which situations or people are simulated or pretended?
- Which best describes the variety in your child's dramatic play? a) one favorite theme which is used almost all of the time, b) two or three favorite themes which are varied but generally stuck with, or c) a wide range of themes and enjoyment of variety.

Representational play

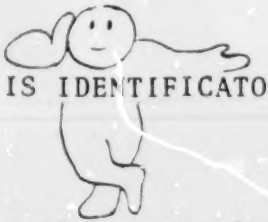
- Does your child ever engage in play in which things are made, built or drawn?
- When your chid is free to build or make things, what is made?

Humor

- Which statement best describes your child's ability to perceive humor? a) makes little

or no attempt to do or say some funny things, b) attempts to do or say some funny things primarily to imitate what the child has seen others do, or c) takes information and uses it to produce creative humor which is new.

A parent leader offered this helpful definition, saying "Gifted children do things a little easier, a little better, a little more quickly and a little bit differently from other children." Parents should always remember that a gifted child is both gifted and a child. Like all children, gifted children need and respond to love, care, interest and guidance from their parents.



WHAT IS IDENTIFICATON?

BACKGROUND

Gifted children need equal opportunity for full development. Many gifted children are being neglected in classrooms throughout the state and the nation. Often, gifted children appear to do very well in school without special attention. When this occurs, the sense of urgency to identify gifted children diminishes. The number of gifted children who are being identified and served has increased from 4 percent to about 12 percent, leaving 88 percent unidentified and unserved in formal programs. When as many as 17 percent of gifted children are dropouts*, the schools are failing these children.

Educators, both on the state and federal level, have become fully aware of this national disaster of lost potential, and have put out urgent pleas to identify the gifted and develop programs for them. How are these pleas being met by the schools and parents?

Effective means of identifying the potentially gifted child are vitally important and early identification and program implementation must be stressed. There are many considerations when identifying the gifted child. The identification program must be an integration of many identification procedures with no one providing

*"Education of the Gifed and Talented," Report to the Congress of the United States by the Commissioner of Education, Washington D.C., 1972.

the total answer for complete identification. However, a case study approach, with test scores, parental observations and teacher observations, gives as much information as possible about the child from many different viewpoints.

IDENTIFICATION BY TESTING

A primary basis on which children have been identified as gifted has been their superiority in the intellectual areas. But many children with a high ability to conceptualize are not easy to find through observations. With the tests, the teacher can not only identify the gifted child, but can also interpret and understand individual differences in behavior and performance among these children. The achievement tests are performance indicators and indicate the percentile the child is in compared with a group of the same grade. The letters IQ stand for Intelligence Quotient. It is calculated by dividing a person's chronological age into mental age (as measured on an intelligence test) and multiplying the answer by 100:

$$IQ = \frac{MA}{CA} \times 100$$

The IQ ranks a child's general mental maturity in relation to others of the same chronological age. Intelligence is multifactored, and some IQ tests will show subscores for verbal and nonverbal abilities. Each factor should be looked at independently so teachers can design their instruction for each child to help further educational guidance.

There are many different intelligence tests available, and the Appendix of this booklet has listed and described twelve of the most commonly used. Group intelligence and achievement tests are quickly and

easily administered to a large group of children, but are not the most ideal method of obtaining a score.

Many children cannot perform in large group situations. Often, there are disturbances in the testing room that block concentration. The individual intelligence test takes more time and considerably more expense since it tests each child individually, but it does provide more precise test data. It also provides a safer environment for the child who is not achieving for some social purpose. There are many tests available and each school district has its own favorites. But whatever test is used, the score should be considered along with the teacher and parental observations.

IDENTIFICATION BY TEACHER OBSERVATION

Teachers see the children in an academic setting and can be very important in identifying the gifted child. This identification method has its limitations:

- Intellectual abilities are not always easy to find because many gifted children with high reasoning and conceptualization are not performing well in school.
- The eager to please child may be identified as gifted because academic work is excellent while the child may be working above individual ability level.

Teachers can observe the child who easily grasps ideas and can function independently. They can also observe the level of work the child is able to accomplish. Teachers' observations are also very important in the social, emotional, physical and motivational aspects of the child's behavior. To aid the teachers' observations in these areas of children's behavior,

there are several behavior checklists available. The Williams Scale, and the Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students are two used frequently.

IDENTIFICATION BY PARENTS

Parents are equally as important in identifying the gifted child. See section "What Should Parents Look For?" There is evidence that parents are reasonably accurate in evaluating their child's intellectual abilities. Parents may become more reliable if they are made aware of actual behaviors of the gifted child.

OUTCOMES OF IDENTIFICATION

Any system used to identify the gifted must take into account the total world of the child and the educational programs that come out of the identification of the child. Identification of the gifted can help develop programs which provide a supportive educational environment for the child as well as guidance and planning aids to parents.

WHAT ARE PARENTS' RIGHTS?

Parents must know their rights, and the rights of their gifted child. Parents of gifted children should check with their school district to find out if it has a gifted program. If there isn't, what is the reason? If there is an established program, what identification procedures are used? What IQ tests are used, and how is the child placed in the program?

Parents should be aware that they must be notified and give permission to have their child individually tested and that the test score will be shared with them through the district office giving the test. However, there are some tests, such as achievement tests and some group intelligence tests that do not require parental permission. The scores are made available to parents through the classroom teacher or school principal. If there is a current gifted program in a school district, parents should not hesitate to describe their child's exceptional behavior to a teacher or administrator. Ask that the district test the child. If the district is unable to test the child, there are other testing services available in most communities. Private counseling testing services, pediatricians, family doctors, medical schools, psychologists and local colleges and universities all may be considered for outside testing. Preschool testing is usually done by private services, except when applied to early entrance for kindergarten.

If parents are concerned about identification procedures they should feel free to discuss the tests with their school district's psychological testing

department or other experienced people. It is equally important that parents understand the purposes of the tests used and what the resulting scores mean. For a discussion of the merits of specific tests, parents may want to read Buros Mental Measurements Yearbook, 7th edition, available at most large libraries. For more information, parents may want to write:

Information Services for the Talented and Gifted
The Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, Virginia 22091

If programs for the gifted are going to work, parents must become involved, from the identification procedure to the educational programs planned. They must be informed of new legislation and of programs developing in the schools. For the benefit of the gifted child and society, parents and schools must collaborate for the best possible program design and delivery services.

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Write to San Fernando Valley Association for Gifted Children, 8320 Reseda Blvd., Northridge, California 91324, for their brochure on starting a club.

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SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON TALENTED AND GIFTED

Association for the Gifted (TAG)
Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, Virginia 22091

Bob Siewart, Specialist for Talented and Gifted
Rod Meyer, Center for Program Coordination
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ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted
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Reston, Virginia 22091

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)
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National/State Leadership Training Institute on Gifted/Talented
316 West Second Street PHOC
Los Angeles, California 90012

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APPENDIX

COMMON IDENTIFICATION TOOLS

The Educational Improvement Center (New Jersey) has reviewed 113 methods of identifying gifted children and indicates that the following programs are used the most frequently:

1. Slosson Intelligence Test is an individual intelligence test which is quick to administer and score. The scoring procedure is objective, and the test itself consists of items adapted from the Stanford-Binet. Slosson Educational Publications, Dublin, New Hampshire 03444.

2. Otis-Lennon Mental Ability Test is a group intelligence test, easy to administer and score, but caution is advised by the manual in using this test with children who do not have majority, middle class backgrounds or motivation. Studies indicate high reliability and good validity. Roger Lennon, Harcourt-Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

3. Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale, Third Revision is the pioneer in intelligence assessment. This individual intelligence test has largely been superseded by the Wechsler. Lewis M. Terman and Maude A. Merrill, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2 Park Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02107.

4. Lorge-Thorndike is a group intelligence test. The Lorge-Thorndike verbal and nonverbal tests exhibit high correlations with achievement tests. The test appears to measure traits

somewhat different from other intelligence tests; nevertheless, Lorge-Thorndike IQ's correlate moderately to well with school achievement and other IQ measures. Lorge-Thorndike, Hagen, Houghton Mifflin Company.

5. WISC is an individual test of intelligence which includes verbal and performance subtests. It is generally regarded as the best available individually administered intelligence test. The test is considered a stable, useful and valid measure which correlates well with other tests of intelligence. David Wechsler, Psychological Corporation, 304 E. 45th Street, New York, New York 10036.

6. Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests: Readiness Skills is an individually administered test. The length of the test, 120 minutes, is quite demanding on the kindergarten and first-grade subjects. Correlation of test results with first-grade reading achievement is low and positive. Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, New York 10027.

7. Metropolitan Readiness Test is an individual test of reading readiness for kindergarten and first graders, consisting of seven or eight scores. Scoring is relatively easy, and the manual provides important assistance in score interpretation. Reliability is high. The test requires 60 minutes of the subject. Harcourt-Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 757 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10017.

8. Differential Aptitude Test is a multi-aptitude test for grades 8-12. The subtests are easily administered and scored, and interpreted assistance is provided. The test exhibits good

reliability. Psychological Corporation, 304 E. 45th Street, New York, New York 10036.

9. Short Form Test of Academic Aptitude provides three scores on language, nonlanguage and total aptitude. CTB/McGraw-Hill Book Company, 330 W. 42nd Street, New York, New York 10036.

10. Torrance Test of Creative Thinking is designed for kindergarten through graduate school. It consists of two parts, a verbal and a figural. The test is called a "research edition" and is one of the first attempts to reveal and measure creativity. Personnel Press, Inc., 20 Nassau Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540.

11. California Test of Mental Maturity is a group intelligence test which attempts to assess abilities believed fundamental to learning, problem-solving and the ability to respond to new situations. No attempt has apparently been made to reduce culture bias. CTB/McGraw-Hill Book Company, 330 W. 42nd Street, New York, New York 10036.

12. Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test is an individual intelligence test which requires no reading by the student. American Guidance Service, Circle Pines, Minnesota 55014.

BOYD DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRESS SCALE

AGE ____ ____ ____

MOTOR SKILLS

8	6 mos.	1	18 mos.	2
Follows object	Takes two cubes	Builds tower of 2 blocks	Builds tower of 4 blocks	Builds bridge of 3 blocks
Rolls over	Sits without support	Walks alone	Walks upstairs	Cuts with scissors
Grasps object	Walks holding on	Walks backwards	Jumps	Balances on 1 foot 1 sec.
Bears weight	Stands alone	Stoops and recovers	Throws overhand	Rides tricycle
Transfers objects	Pincer grasp	Scribbles	Imitates line	Copies circle

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

8	6 mos.	1	18 mos.	2
Responds to bell	Says—mama, dada	Plays ball	Show-mouth, eyes, hair, nose 1/4	Show-mouth eyes, hair nose 4/4
Babbles	Imitates Sounds	Uses 3 to 5 words	Block-on table to me; on floor 2/3	Block-on, under, front back 2/4
Follows person visually	Responds to no-no, bye-bye	Indicates specific wants	Combines words	Uses plurals
Smiles	Hesitates with strangers	Mimics chores	Brings objects on request	Gives full name
Turns to whisper	1 Word—not mama, dada	Solitary play	Parallel play	Cooperative play

SELF SUFFICIENCY SKILLS

8	6 mos.	1	18 mos.	2
Head upright and steady	Drinks from cup with help	Feeds—scoops with spoon (or fork)	Discriminates edible substances	Feeds—uses fork to spear
Recovers toy from chest	Uncovers face	Chews food	Unwraps candy or gum	Blocks—give "just one"
Reaches for objects	Works for toy	Drinks without help	Solves pellet bottle	Washes, dries own hands
Occupies self, unattended	Pulls self upright	Opens closed doors	Goes about house	Avoids danger —street
Feeds self cracker	Gets to sitting position	Removes clothing	Puts on some clothing	Gets own drink

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3	4	5	6	7	8
10 pellets in bottle 30 sec.	Catches ball, bounced 2/3	10 pellets in bottle 20 sec.	Rides bicycle	Arranges material neatly	
Alternates downstairs	Cuts–follows simple outline	[1]Prints first name	[1]Prints full name	Cuts round outline well	
Balances on 1 foot 5 sec.	Balances on 1 foot 10 sec.	Builds steps of 6 blocks	[1]Prints 1-20 few reversals	[1]Prints 1-20 no revs. 1/2 inch	
Hops on 1 foot	[2]Draws Man 4 parts	[2]Draws Man 6 parts	[2]Draws Man 9 parts	Writes full name (cursive)	
Copies cross	Copies square	Copies triangle	Copies vertical diamond	Constructs objects/cooks	

[1]On back of drawing sheet [2]On back of this sheet

3	4	5	6	7	8
[2]What do we– 6/7	Made of-car window, dress 2/3	Made of-fork door, shoe 3/3	[2]Names animals 1 min. 9	Names days of week	
Block-on, under, front, back 3/4	[2]Completes analogies 2/3	[2]Definitions 6/9	Alike–boat/airplane; hat/shoe 1/2	Tells own address	
Do–tired, cold, hungry 2/3	Do–cross street	[3]Reads .5 grade level	[3]Reads 1.5 grade level	[3]Reads 2.5 grade level	
Show–"longer" 3/3 or 5/6	Show–"smoother" 3/3 or 5/6	Show–R-ear L-eye, R-leg L-arm 4/4	When–breakfast, bed, afternoon 3/3	Show–upper R, lower L; middle 3/3	
Separates–without fuss	Tells age	Plays competitive games	Answers phone-takes message	Plays organized group games	

[2]On back of this sheet [3]Use WRAT

3	4	5	6	7	8
Feeds–cuts with fork	Brushes own teeth	Names–penny, dime, nickel 2/3	Spreads own bread	Cuts own meat (knife)	
Counts-2 blocks/pellets 2/2	Counts–4 and 3 blocks 2/2	Counts–10 and 8 blocks 2/2	Solves–2+1, 3+2, 5-1 2/3	Solves–8+6, 9-5, 7+4 2/3	
Ident.–blue, yellow, red, green 3/4	Washes own face	Blows own nose	Bathes self, complete	Buys with money	
Cares for self at toilet	Goes about within block	Goes about, crosses streets	Goes to bed unassisted	Tells time, quarter hour	
Dresses without help	Buttons-correct, complete	Errands outside home	Ties own shoes	Grooms self	

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Oregon Series on Talented & Gifted Education

- Identifying the Talented and Gifted
- Administering Policy for Talented and Gifted
- Talented and Gifted Education Policy
- Parenting Gifted Children
- Organizing a Parent Support Group for Talented and Gifted
- Talented and Gifted School Programs
- The Gifted Preschool Child
- Characteristics of Talented and Gifted Children
- Who Is Gifted?
- Counseling Your Gifted Child

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